



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

## NMFS Announces a Proposed Rule to Improve the Ability of U.S. Vessels to Fully Harvest the North Atlantic Swordfish Quota

The Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management Division proposes to modify current regulations affecting the U.S. swordfish fishery. These measures are intended to provide opportunities for U.S. vessels to fully harvest the domestic swordfish quota, in recognition of the improved stock status of North Atlantic swordfish, while ensuring that bycatch of non-target and protected species remain within acceptable levels.

The proposed alternatives would increase retention limits for Incidental swordfish permit holders to 30 fish, except that vessels that participate in the squid trawl fishery would be limited to 15 swordfish. For HMS Angling category permit holders, the swordfish retention limit would remain at one per person, but the vessel limit would be increased to four fish. Finally, for HMS Charter/headboat permit holders, the swordfish retention limit would change to one per paying passenger, up to maximum of six per charter vessel, and 15 per headboat vessel. NMFS is also proposing to modify vessel upgrading restrictions for vessels that are authorized to fish for swordfish and tunas with pelagic longline gear (*i.e.*, vessels that possess limited access swordfish and shark permits, as well as an Atlantic tunas longline category permit). The proposed alternative would specify that these vessels may be upgraded, or permits transferred, so long as the upgrade or permit transfer does not result in an increase in vessel size (LOA, GRT, and NT) of more than 35 percent, relative to the vessel first issued the HMS limited access permit.

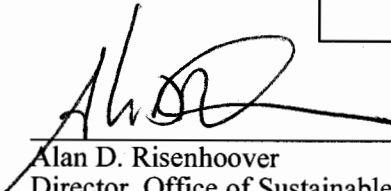
The comment period for this proposed rule is open until January 31, 2007. Written comments may be submitted to the address below or emailed to: [SF1.110206A@noaa.gov](mailto:SF1.110206A@noaa.gov). NMFS will announce the times and locations of public hearings in a future Federal Register notice.

This notice is a courtesy to the HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of Federal fishing actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of Federal Register. For further information on this proposed rule and its requirements, contact Sari Kiraly at (301) 713-2347 or Rick Pearson at (727) 824-5399. Copies of the proposed rule and draft Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis are available upon request from the Highly Migratory Species Management Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (phone: 301-713-2347, fax: 301-713-1917). The information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>.

### SIGN UP FOR ATLANTIC HMS NEWS

An electronic newsletter informing you of the latest  
HMS related actions:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/newslist>

  
Alan D. Risenhoover  
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

NOV 22 2006

Date



Printed on Recycled Paper

